

# A HISTORY OF MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 232



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION  
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

*A Curtiss F6C-4 Hawk belonging to Marine Fighting Squadron 10 (VF-10M), the forerunner of VMFA-232, on the line at NAS North Island in August 1931. The Red Devil insignia which has survived through the years is clearly visible on the vertical stabilizer. (USMC Photo 530812).*

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By

Major William J. Sambito, USMC



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# FOREWORD

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This history, which traces Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 from 1925 to the present, is one in a series of Marine squadron histories in which we hope to bring to light the achievements of individual squadrons and relate them to the general development of Marine aviation.

The author, Major William J. Sambito, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Colby College, Maine, and is an experienced helicopter pilot who served with HMM-262 and -165 during the Vietnam War. After attending the Armed Forces Staff College in January 1975, he was assigned to the History and Museums Division.

Major Sambito has been a major contributor to the series of squadron histories. He was also the author of *A History of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 312* and *A History of Marine Attack Squadron 311* and assisted in the editing of *A History of Marine Attack Squadron 223*.

The History and Museums Division welcomes any comments on the narrative and additional information or illustrations which might enhance a future, much expanded treatment of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232's history.



E. H. SIMMONS  
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)  
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums

Reviewed and approved:  
15 June 1978

# PREFACE

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The history of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 is a narrative account of the "Red Devil" squadron in action since its beginning in 1925. The brief history shows the early structure of the squadron from its fledgling start as VF-3M when it was flying primitive VE-7s to the present day VMFA 232 flying Phantom F4-Js. It outlines in chronological order the battles undertaken during World War II and Vietnam, and tells briefly of the pilots and crewmen and the hardships they endured to carry out their missions. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 is steeped in tradition and continually holds its standards high. It is hoped that this brief history adequately sketches the story and prompts others to contribute their insights, remembrances, records, photographs, and other memorabilia so that the complete history may someday be written.

The manuscript was typed by Miss Cathy Stoll and prepared for publication by the Production Editor, Mr. Douglas Johnston. Most of the photographs used in this monograph are official Department of Defense (Marine Corps) photographs from the History and Museums Division. Other photographs were provided by Lieutenant General Richard C. Mangrum.



WILLIAM J. SAMBITO  
Major, U. S. Marine Corps

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# A History of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232

*Early Developments—World War II—Reactivation—The Jet Age—Combat and the Far East*

## *Early Developments*

The original "Red Devil" Squadron was activated 1 September 1925 as Division 1, Fighting Plane Squadron 3M (VF-3M), 2d Aviation Group, at Naval Air Station (NAS) San Diego, California. At the time of activation only Division 1 was manned. This element provided the nucleus for the squadron that eventually became VMFA-232.\* The squadron's first commanding officer, Second Lieutenant Clayton C. Jerome,\*\* retained command for only 19 days before relinquishing his position to First Lieutenant William J. Wallace.\*\*\* Lieutenant Wallace's squadron then consisted of Lieutenant Jerome plus 78 enlisted men.

\*The terms "squadron" and "division" as used in the 1920s may be misleading to one familiar with today's aviation organization. Their meaning at that time, as well as the overall purpose of the organization adopted, was explained in 1926 by Major Edwin H. Brainard.<sup>1</sup> "Marine Corps aviation," he told students at Quantico, "is organized along Navy lines, with the division as the administrative unit and the squadron as the tactical unit. In order to have an organization capable of large expansion in time of emergency, the peacetime squadrons are only one-third their war strength, i.e., one division active and two inactive. A division consists of 75 enlisted men and 10 commissioned officers. This gives the nucleus around which to recruit the two inactive divisions, and the addition of a squadron commander and staff gives a war strength unit which should be fairly efficient and capable of shortly performing any task. A division consists of six planes active and three in reserve. Therefore, a full strength squadron has eighteen active planes and nine in reserve, and in addition two planes attached to squadron headquarters and one transport."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Clayton C. Jerome graduated from the Naval Academy in 1922 and completed his flight training at Pensacola, Florida, in 1925. Later as a major general and veteran of five World War II campaigns, he commanded the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Korea from April 1952 to January 1953. Upon his retirement in 1958, he was promoted to lieutenant general. He died 13 February 1978 in Washington, D.C.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup>William J. Wallace was commissioned a second

The first aircraft assigned to the new squadron was the Vought VE-7SF. This single-seater fighter-trainer was first received in the Marine Corps inventory in 1921. Powered by a single 180-horsepower engine, this biplane had a maximum speed of approximately 150 miles per hour. During 1926, the unit began replacing the VE-7SFs with Boeing FB-1 fighters. The Boeing biplane was equipped with a Curtiss 410-horsepower engine, was capable of a speed of 167 miles per hour, and had a service ceiling of 21,200 feet.

The squadron remained at NAS San Diego until 7 April 1927. Then, embarked on board the naval transport USS *Henderson*, the unit, now boasting of five aviators, sailed for China as part of Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler's 3d Brigade. The mission of this force was to protect the lives and property of the U.S. nationals in China during a period of civil turmoil. The *Henderson* arrived in Shanghai on 3 May, only to find that arrangements with the Chinese Government for the use of a landing field had not been completed. The aviation component, consisting of Marine Observation Squadron 5 (VO-5M) and VF-3M, both under the command of Major Francis T. Evans and later Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Turner, proceeded to the Naval Station, Olongapo, Philippine Islands, where it remained until returning to Shanghai on 13 June 1927.<sup>3</sup>

The squadrons stayed in the Shanghai area on board the *Henderson* until 25 June and then began

lieutenant in 1918. As a lieutenant colonel, he was executive officer of Marine Aircraft Group 21 on Hawaii when the Japanese attacked. Later, as a colonel, he commanded Marine Aircraft Group 23 at Guadalcanal and, as a brigadier general, commanded the Air Defense and Fighter Command in Okinawa in 1945. From 1945 to 1950, Major General Wallace was the director of Marine Corps aviation. In 1952, after 34 years of service, he retired with the rank of lieutenant general. He died 7 July 1977.



USMC Photo 516113

*The FB-1 fighter built by Boeing eventually replaced the VE-7. This Boeing biplane equipped with a Curtiss 410-horsepower engine was capable of a speed of 167 miles an hour. This fighter is on the Marine landing strip at Tientsin, China in 1927.*

the voyage north to Tientsin. On 30 June, the units arrived at Camp MacMurray, Hsin-Ho, where they were joined by the ground element of the 3d Brigade. Twelve days after arriving in China, VF-3M was redesignated VF-10M, and on 1 July 1928 the squadron designation was changed to VF-6M. During its stay in China, the squadron engaged in training, aerial photography, mapping, and reconnaissance missions around Tientsin.<sup>4</sup>

On 3 October 1928, its mission in China completed, the squadron sailed for California, again on board the USS *Henderson*. After stops en route at Guam on 10 October and Honolulu on the 21st, the ship arrived at San Diego on 31 October. The unit was reassigned to Aircraft Squadrons, West Coast Expeditionary Force, NAS San Diego. The squadron, now reduced to 2 officers and 68 enlisted men, began the process of rebuilding and training newly designated aviators. Training consisted of familiarization, basic instruments, combat maneuvering, and gunnery proficiency flights.

In 1929 the squadron acquired a new aircraft. The plane which replaced the FB-1 was the newer Boeing FB-5. The FB-5 was similar in appearance to the earlier model, but had a slightly larger Packard 475-horsepower engine which increased the airspeed to 170 miles per hour. Shortly after receiving the new planes, the squadron officially adopted the "Red

Devil" insignia. Lieutenant General Richard C. Mangrum,\* however, remembers that, "The Red Devil insignia certainly antedated 1930. It was on the FB-1s and FB-5s in 1929 and my impression is that it dated back at least to the mid-1920s."<sup>5</sup> According to a Chief of Naval Operations letter to the commanding officer of Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 232 on 30 August 1944, the Red Devil design, "submitted in 1930, has a white field, a black border and a bright-red flying devil. The field is diamond-shaped, measures 12" on each side and is superimposed on aluminum-enameled airplane fabric." The letter went on to say, "The origin and

\* Lieutenant General Mangrum has had a distinguished career in Marine aviation. He was designated a naval aviator on 20 August 1929 and for the next 12 years served in a variety of Marine aviation billets on the West Coast, and was a member of VF-6M in 1930. In 1942, as a major, he commanded VMSB-232 against the Japanese, and was awarded the Navy Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Later during the Korean War, as a colonel, he commanded MAG-12. As a major general he commanded both the 1st and 2d MAWs. On 1 October 1965, he succeeded to the title "Grey Eagle" of naval aviation, and was the first Marine aviator to attain this distinction. The "Grey Eagle" is the earliest designated aviator on active duty in the Navy and Marine Corps. His final assignment in the Marine Corps was as Assistant Commandant from 1965-1967. Lieutenant General Mangrum retired 30 June 1967.



*F6C-4 aircraft of Fighting Plane Squadron 10M (VF-10M) on line at San Diego in 1930. Although the Red Devils are not distinguishable, the diamond-shape fields clearly show on the vertical fins.*

significance of 'Red Devils' is not recorded."<sup>6</sup> So the reason for adoption of this particular motif remains a mystery. Although the squadron's designation changed several times in the years to follow, the insignia had survived in its original form throughout the unit's history.<sup>7</sup>

On 1 July 1930, the squadron underwent another change in designation, this time reverting to Marine Fighting Plane Squadron 10M (VF-10M), the designation it had used during its first year in China.

Also in July of 1930, the squadron received Curtiss F6C-4 Hawks which replaced the FB-5s. Lieutenant General Mangrum recalls the event:

We got nine of them, second-hand from the Navy, in bad shape and all needing overhaul. Six were put into overhaul immediately by the engineering unit, and three were retained as flyable while the first six were overhauled.<sup>8</sup>

This single-seat fighter, powered by a 410-horsepower radial engine, was not appreciably different than the FB-1s and the FB-5s. The pilots quickly adjusted to the F6C-4, and by September VF-10M, with six freshly reconditioned F6C-4s, was attached to the Army's 95th Pursuit Group, commanded by Major Carl "Tooe" Spaatz, to help in the defense of the San Francisco area against attacking Navy carriers, the *Lexington* and *Saratoga*. General Mangrum recalling the event states:

The six were under the command of Bill McKittrick, and included Paul Putnam and Mike Wodarczyk and me.<sup>9</sup> We based at Crissy Field at the Presidio in San

<sup>6</sup>William L. McKittrick was promoted to major general upon retiring on 1 October 1951. Paul A. Putnam stayed on active duty until June 1956 rising to the rank of colonel; promoted to brigadier general on the retired list. Michael Wodarczyk was appointed as a captain in February 1942. He was placed on the retired list as a colonel in June 1946. All three had highly successful careers in Marine Corps aviation.

Francisco, and later at the Curtiss-Wright field on San Francisco Bay, later to become the present San Francisco airport. Fog was over the Bay the day we arrived; ceiling about 400 feet. As we passed San Francisco waterfront heading for Crissy Field, Gunner Mike Wodarczyk had an engine failure, landed in the water off one of the piers. Fortunately, a freighter just backing out for departure put a sling on the tail of Mike's plane, hoisted him aboard, and dropped him off at the Army's Fort Mason en route out the Golden Gate. Why and how VF-10M got mixed up with the Army in this exercise I don't remember....

After the exercise with the Army the squadron returned to San Diego.

By the end of June 1932, the Red Devils logged nearly 2,000 hours of accident-free flying. For this accomplishment, the Major General Commandant, Ben H. Fuller, awarded the unit the Herbert H. Schiff Memorial Cup<sup>10</sup> for fiscal year 1932.<sup>10</sup> During late 1932, the squadron began receiving its first F4B-4 fighters. The Red Devils became the second Marine Corps unit to be equipped with this single-engine biplane. The plane could take off in 440 feet, land at 63 miles per hour, and had a top speed of 184 miles per hour.

In 1933, the squadron participated in the Los Angeles National Air Races held 1-4 July. By the time the races took place, the Red Devils were thoroughly familiar with the new machine. A six-man aeronautical team consisting of Captain Vernon

<sup>10</sup>The Schiff Memorial Cup was established in memory of Lieutenant Herbert H. Schiff, USN, who served as an aviator in World War I and was killed in an aircraft accident on 11 July 1924. This award was presented annually to a naval aviation squadron for outstanding performance in the area of aviation safety.



USMC Photo 530812

*The F6C-4 Curtiss Hawk replaced the Marine FB-5s. The Hawk was powered by a single 410-horsepower radial engine which was not appreciably different from the engines in the FB predecessors.*

M. Guymon,\* the commanding officer, Second Lieutenant Samuel S. Jack,\*\* Marine Gunners Michael Wodarczyk and Albert S. Munsch, Gunnery Sergeant Kenneth A. Woolsey, and Staff Sergeant William E. Ward demonstrated to the Services and the nation the daring and skill of Marine aviators. The first day of the races also marked the beginning of a new mission for the Red Devils. "Fighting Ten" was redesignated as Bombing Plane Squadron 4M (VB-4M) on that date.

The squadron continued its normal training and familiarization routine until 14 February 1935 when the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet assigned Aircraft Two, of which VB-4M was a part, to Aircraft, Battle Force, United States Fleet for operations. From 29 April to 12 June, the Red Devils participated in fleet training and United States Fleet Problem XIV. During June, upon return from fleet training, the squadron received 16 Great Lake BG-1 bombers as replacements for its F4Bs. The single-engine biplane was powered by a Pratt & Whitney 750 horsepower engine which enabled it to reach a

speed of 206 miles per hour. The "Bee-Gee" carried a two-man crew, a pilot and a bombardier/gunner.

In 1936, after becoming familiar with the BG-1, the squadron conducted flight operations on board the carriers USS Lexington and Saratoga. On 1 July 1937, the unit was redesignated as Marine Bombing Squadron 2 (VMB-2). In 1938, while embarked on board the Lexington for Fleet Problem XIX, VMB-2 made 187 accident-free landings. During the week of 23-28 May 1938, the Red Devils were again at sea, this time on board the USS Ranger for training and carrier operations. Between cruises the squadron returned to its home base, San Diego. During late

*Along with its new designation, Bombing Plane Squadron 4M (VB-4M) received BG-1 bombers. The BG-1 was built by Great Lakes and carried a pilot and a bombardier/gunner. It was known throughout Marine aviation as the "Bee-Gee." USMC Photo 514904.*

\*Vernon M. Guymon served as Assistant Wing Commander, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing during World War II and retired in 1949 with the rank of brigadier general.

\*\*Samuel S. Jack served during World War II on Guadalcanal, New Caledonia, and in the New Hebrides. During the Korean Conflict he served as chief of staff, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and later as commanding general. In 1961 he retired with the rank of major general.





USMC Photo A402819

*The Douglas SBD-1 Dauntless scout bomber. VMB-2 first received the two-seat monoplane late in 1940.*

1940, the squadron turned in its BG-1s and replaced them with the new Douglas SBD-1 Dauntless scout bombers. The two-seat monoplane was equipped with two .50 caliber machineguns in the nose and two .30 caliber guns on a flexible mount in the rear cockpit. For dive bombing, one 1,000-pound bomb could be carried beneath the fuselage, and two 100-pound bombs were mounted under the wings.

#### *World War II*

On 11 January 1941, in response to the ever-mounting tension in the Pacific, the squadron moved from San Diego to Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Ewa, Oahu, Territory of Hawaii, on board the USS *Enterprise*. On 21 January VMB-2, with 21 officers, 116 enlisted men, and 20 Dauntless scout-bombers, arrived in Hawaii and was assigned to the 2d Marine Aircraft Group (MAG-2), Fleet Marine Force. The unit immediately began flight operations as part of the islands' defensive air patrol system. On 1 July 1941, the squadron was redesignated Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron 232 (VMSB-232) and on 1 August the 2d Marine Aircraft Group became Marine Aircraft Group 21 (MAG-21), 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (2d MAW), FMF.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December, the Red Devils' 20 SBDs were lined up on the field at MCAS, Ewa. Twenty-five minutes later, 9 were completely destroyed and 10 were so badly damaged that they required major overhaul. Only one plane escaped with minor damage. Fortunately,

only one squadron member was killed during the attack. On Wake Island, however, where the Red Devils had a detachment of 25 enlisted Marines, the men were not as lucky. Eight were killed before the Japanese landed, and the remainder were either killed or captured while assisting in the defense of the doomed island.<sup>11</sup>

For the next 8 months, VMSB-232 remained at Ewa where it received 12 new SBD-3 Dauntlesses powered by a larger 1,100-horsepower engine.

In August 1942, the opportunity came to avenge the attacks on Pearl Harbor and Wake Island. Assigned to MAG-23, the squadron embarked on board the escort carrier USS *Long Island* (CVE 1), and on 20 August landed on Guadalcanal's 3,000-foot dirt runway called Henderson Field. The first combat missions were flown on 23 August. Although several Japanese ships were sighted, it was not until the 25th that the squadron, now assigned to the 1st MAW, scored any confirmed hits. Second Lieutenant Lawrence Baldinus seriously damaged an enemy cruiser, when he dropped a bomb on the ship just forward of the bridge. Two transports and a destroyer were also hit that day. Under the leadership of Major Richard C. Mangrum, the Red Devils were in almost daily action against the Japanese. When the squadron left Guadalcanal on 13 October 1942, Mangrum, newly promoted to lieutenant colonel, was the only pilot of the original 15 Guadalcanal Red Devils able to walk away from Henderson Field. Seven pilots had been killed, four wounded the rest evacuated.<sup>12</sup> For his actions at Guadalcanal,



USMC Photo 145092

*Ewa airfield, Hawaii 1942. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, most of the Red Devil's aircraft were destroyed while still on the ground.*



USMC Photo 12734

*The Grumman TBF-1 Avenger was a single engine, 3-crew, torpedo bomber monoplane. The Avenger carried a regulation 2000-pound torpedo internally or four 500-pound bombs.*

Mangrum received the Navy Cross and the first Distinguished Flying Cross awarded for the Guadalcanal campaign.

On 18 November the squadron arrived at San Diego and then moved to MCAS El Toro, California, where it remained, assigned to MAG-23, until it returned to the Pacific in July 1943. While at El Toro, the Red Devils acquired a new mission, torpedo bombing, and new equipment, the Grumman TBF-1 Avenger. This 1,600-horsepower aircraft carried a three-man crew: pilot, radio operator-undergunner, and rear-gunner. In addition to five machineguns, the plane carried one 2,000-pound naval torpedo or four 500-pound bombs.

With the change in mission came yet another change in unit designation. On 1 June 1943, the squadron became Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 232 (VMTB-232). On 16 July 1943 the squadron embarked and sailed from San Diego on the USS *President Polk* (AP 103). It arrived at Noumea, New Caledonia, on 2 August. The following day some of the personnel, really an advance party, transferred to the SS *Dashing Wave* (a civilian-manned troopship operated by the War Shipping Administration) and steamed for Espiritu Santo, New Hebrides, where they arrived on 6 August. The main body remained at Noumea until the 17th and then followed to Espiritu Santo on board the USS *Rixey* (APH 3). It arrived there on 20 August. Thus by September 1943, the Red Devils were back in the Pacific helping to knock out Japanese shipping, airfields, and installations on virtually every island of the Solomons.

Through January 1944, the unit operated primarily in the vicinity of Bougainville while flying from Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides, Guadalcanal, and Munda on New Georgia. During this period VMTB-232 was assigned to MAG-24. From Bougainville, operations shifted to the New Britain Island area. On 17 January hunting was especially good for the Red Devils. While attacking an enemy convoy, 15 of the 18 squadron TBFs reported hitting targets. Navy and Marine Corps squadrons sank 5 ships and downed 17 Japanese fighters.<sup>13</sup>

From May to October 1944, the Red Devils flew from fields throughout the Solomons. From the New Hebrides in the south to Emirau in the north, the squadron, then assigned to MAG-11, sought out enemy targets. In November the unit moved to Falalop Island, Ulithi Atoll in the Caroline Islands



USMC Photo A412439  
*Lieutenant General Richard C. Mangrum commanded VMF-232 twice during his career, once while he was a second lieutenant in 1930 and again during World War II in the Pacific.*

and on 1 January 1945, VMTB-232 supported the Army invasion of Fais Island in the Carolines. Until April 1945, the unit remained in the Ulithi area neutralizing Japanese-held bases, providing anti-submarine patrols, escorting convoys, and furnishing air defense for the fleet anchorage at Ulithi.

The next move for the Red Devils brought them to Okinawa on 22 April 1945 where they joined MAG-33 at Kadena Airfield. By the end of April, over 100 missions had been flown. The cost to the squadron was two aircraft and crews lost to enemy action. While most of the glory of flying over Okinawa was achieved by the fighters, First Lieutenant Fred F. Folino in an Avenger shot down an enemy plane with air-to-ground rockets the night of 17 May putting the Red Devils in the scoring column for aircraft kills. The squadron then began making regular runs against the enemy airfields and installations in Japan and continued pounding the enemy until 15 August



USMC Photo 529599

*Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat fighter. The single-seater Hellcat was equipped with a 2,000-horsepower engine and could attain speeds in excess of 400 miles per hour.*

when hostilities ceased. The Red Devils flew anti-submarine patrol and convoy missions until departing for the United States on 31 October.

During its participation in operations throughout the Pacific, VMTB-232 lost 49 men and 17 aircraft, of which 29 Marines and 8 aircraft were directly attributable to enemy action. On 16 November the squadron—one of the few to earn two Presidential Unit Citations—arrived at San Diego, was decommissioned, and the Red Devil insignia was shelved. But it would be only a temporary interruption.

#### *Reactivation*

The Red Devils were reactivated in the Marine Corps Reserve as Marine Fighter Squadron 232 (VMF-232) on 3 June 1948 at the Naval Air Station at Floyd Bennett Field, New York, once more becoming a fighter squadron after a 15-year lapse. In July 1949 the 41 officers and 113 enlisted men of VMF-232, under the command of Captain Thomas S. Ferdinand, participated in Reserve training at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina. All flying at this time had to be done in aircraft belonging to other squadrons, because it was not until the unit returned to New York that it began receiving Grumman F6F-5 Hellcats. The single-seat Hellcat was equipped with a 2,000-horsepower engine and could attain speeds in excess of 400 miles per hour. The fighter

was armed with six 50-caliber machineguns (three in each wing) and could carry two 5-inch rocket pods with either two 1,000-pound bombs or external fuel tanks. The aircraft, credited with downing 5,155 Japanese planes, could climb at a rate of 3,000 feet per minute and had a service ceiling of 37,000.<sup>14</sup>

For the next year the squadron's efforts were directed towards building the unit into a combat-ready force. As a result of these efforts, VMF-232 won the Willard "Jesse" Reed Trophy for 1949. This award was presented annually to that squadron at Floyd Bennett Field which had the highest scores throughout the year in attendance, aircraft availability, maneuver performance, inspections, and rifle and pistol competition. Until the middle of September 1950, VMF-232 remained in Reserve status conducting organized drills one weekend each month, in addition to an annual 2-week summer training maneuver.

On 18 September 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean War, VMF-232 was alerted for active duty and 12 days later was ordered to MAG-15, 3d MAW at MCAS El Toro. The squadron was airlifted and arrived at its new duty station on 1 October. Eight days later, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph A. Gray assumed command of the Red Devils. On 14 October the squadron received the first delivery of nine Chance-Vought F4U-4 Corsairs. This single-seat fighter had a turbo-supercharged 2,400-horsepower



USMC Photo A150802

*A well-worn F4U-4 Corsair prepares for a landing. VMF-232 received its first Corsair on 14 October 1950.*

engine—about 400-horsepower more than the previous models—and was used by several land- and carrier-based squadrons. The F4U-4 had four 20mm cannons (two in each wing) and could be armed with two 1,000-pound bombs or eight 5-inch, air-to-ground rockets. This fighter could reach speeds in excess of 450 miles per hour, climb at 4,800 feet per minute, and had a service ceiling of 41,400 feet.<sup>13</sup>

Intensive training soon began in air-to-air gunnery, strafing, dive, glide, and low-level bombing, rocket firing, close air support, night familiarization, instruments, tactics, and navigation. Several squadron members also received instruction in air intelligence, air spotting, and chemical warfare.

On 9 December all pilots, aircraft, and necessary enlisted personnel departed for the Naval Auxiliary Air Station El Centro, California, for field carrier landing practice. The following week the squadron flew to Pensacola, Florida, where the Red Devils joined the pilots of VMF-235 for carrier qualifications on board the light fleet aircraft carrier USS *Wright* (CVL 49). On 23 December 1950, VMF-232 returned to MCAS El Toro.

During the first 6 months of 1951, the unit participated in extensive specialized problems, exercises, and training. By the latter part of April, nearly all the original aviators and 40 percent of the enlisted Marines in the squadron had been detached and were sent overseas in various drafts of Air FMFPac. In May, the possibility of deployment on board a carrier

off Korea caused all squadron activities to be directed toward this type of duty. Consequently, all aviators either qualified or requalified on board the escort carrier USS *Rendova* (CVE 114) between 29 May and 2 June 1951. During that period, the VMF-232 pilots made 212 landings with only one accident; a Corsair was damaged when it struck the ship's landing barrier. Then, from 11-15 June, the squadron provided air support and combat air patrols during a landing exercise conducted in the San Clemente area.

In spite of the fact that 20 more pilots were drafted for combat duty during July, the squadron flew 725 hours during the month. In August all phases of training were intensified, and in October the Red Devils flew 1,054 hours, the highest monthly total since the squadron ceased combat operations in 1945.

During November and December 1951, unit training included napalm delivery and night rocket firing. Unfortunately, the training routine was interrupted on 14 December by a fatal mid-air collision involving Captains William Javoronok and Gay Jones. The following month, First Lieutenant William A. Poe nearly became another statistic. While flying low in search of a simulated target in Silver Creek Canyon, approximately 8 miles from Pickel Meadows, California, he found himself hemmed in on three sides by mountain peaks thousands of feet high. Unable to reverse course, he tried to climb over an 11,000-foot-high ridge directly ahead. While nearly stalled, the plane struck the



USMC Photo A346716

*The first jet fighter for VMF-232 was the F9F-2 Panther built by Grumman. It had a Pratt & Whitney engine which produced 5,750 pounds of thrust and enabled the Panther to reach a speed of 650 miles per hour.*

ridge about 20 feet from the top. The aircraft was destroyed, but Lieutenant Poe escaped uninjured.<sup>16</sup>

For the first half of 1952, VMF-232 remained at El Toro conducting training. In February and March, the squadron flew both day and night missions in support of 3d Marine Division training at Camp Pendleton. During April and May, 29 pilots and 94 enlisted men went to NAS El Centro, California, for ordnance training preparatory to being transferred overseas.

On 27 August 1952, flight operations were secured and the unit's Corsairs were ferried to the overhaul and repair facility to be readied for a shipboard voyage to Hawaii. A week later, the squadron's personnel and equipment were airlifted to NAS Alameda where they were loaded on board the attack transport USS *President Jackson* (APA 18). The Red Devils arrived at Pearl Harbor on 9 September 1952 and reported to MCAS Kaneohe Bay where they were assigned to MAG-13 for 6 months' temporary duty. Six days later flight operations began. The first scheduled training was 4 days of carrier landings on board the attack carrier USS *Oriskany* (CVA 34). The normal routine was interrupted briefly in September when Captain Howard W. Ligon's Corsair caught fire during flight. Unable to extinguish the blaze, Captain Ligon was forced to bail out over the ocean. Within 5 minutes after landing offshore from Kaneohe Bay, a

fishing boat picked up the uninjured pilot and returned him to shore.

#### *The Jet Age*

In March 1953, VMF-232 was homeward bound. It departed Kaneohe on 5 March and arrived at El Toro 6 days later. During that month, the Red Devils received their first jet fighters, the Grumman F9F-2 Panther. The changeover from Corsairs to the single-seat F9F with its 5,750-pound thrust Pratt & Whitney engine virtually halted all flight operations. During most of April, 10 Panthers were on hand, but availability was low because of inexperienced crews as well as a paucity of spare parts. However, by the end of the month, 90 percent of the pilots had received familiarization flights and a 2-week course of instruction for mechanics considerably helped the maintenance effort. In July, just when things seemed to be going well for the squadron, misfortune plagued the unit. On the 13th, Second Lieutenant John J. Dipasqua was killed when his aircraft crashed on takeoff. Additionally, nine F9F-2s were grounded for maintenance during the first 20 days of July which greatly reduced the training effort.<sup>17</sup>

August 1953 was spent preparing for the Red Devils' second 6-month tour at Kaneohe. On the 14th, an advance echelon composed of 3 officers and



USMC Photo A402678

*The North American FJ-4 Fury jet was the latest modification of the famed Saber jet used during the Korean War. VMF-232 traded in the F9F-5 Panther jet for the Furies.*

20 enlisted men left for Hawaii. The remainder of the squadron departed San Diego on 21 September. Effective 4 January 1954, homeport for VMF-232 was changed from MCAS El Toro to MCAS Kaneohe Bay where the unit was assigned to MAG-13.

Flying the Grumman F9F-5 Panther jets, which gave them 500 pounds more thrust than the -2 model, and later the North American FJ-4 Fury, which first arrived in the Marine Corps inventory in 1956, the Red Devils remained in Hawaii for the next 8 years, the only excursion from the islands being a cruise to the western Pacific. The squadron departed Hawaii on 8 September 1958 and deployed to NAS Atsugi, Japan, where, from 17 September to 15

November, the unit was on board the aircraft carrier USS *Bennington* (CVS 40). While deployed on board the carrier, the squadron participated in operations in the Gulf of Taiwan during the Communist bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu Islands. The Red Devils flew combat air patrol missions as directed by U. S. Commander, Taiwan Defense Command until relieved by VMF-451. The unit returned to Atsugi where it remained until it departed for Kaneohe Bay on 15 March 1959.<sup>18</sup>

In early 1962, the squadron transitioned from the FJ-4 to the new Chance Vought F8U-2N Crusader, later redesignated the F-8D. While both the Fury and the Crusader were single-engine, swept-wing fighters, the 16,000-pound thrust engine with af-



USMC Photo A421670

*An F-8E Crusader is ready for takeoff. The Crusader was an all-weather interceptor and on 1 March 1965, VMF-232 became Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 232.*



USMC Photo A417492

*A flight of four Crusaders from VMF-232. The Chance-Vought Crusader with its 16,000-pound thrust engine with afterburner, more than doubled the thrust of the FJ-4.*

terburner of the F-8D far exceeded the performance capabilities of the Fury with its 7,800-pound thrust engine. Although both aircraft were equipped with four 20mm cannons, the Crusader could carry four Sidewinder, heat-seeking, air-to-air missiles while the FJ-4 could only carry two. Additionally, the improved radar and autopilot system of the Crusader enabled it to perform as an all-weather interceptor.<sup>19</sup>

On 12 June 1962, VMF-232 embarked on board the USS *Oriskany* (CVA 34) and operational control of the squadron shifted to Carrier Air Group 16. The ship departed Pearl Harbor on 25 June and arrived in the Philippines on 8 July. While at NAS Cubi Point, an F-8D was lost when the engine flamed out during a test flight. The pilot safely ejected, and the squadron completed the cruise without further accidents.<sup>20</sup>

In July, because of the tension between the Netherlands and Indonesia, the carrier steamed towards New Guinea. The alert was canceled, however, and the ship resumed its normal schedule. The carrier then conducted antiair warfare exercises during which the squadron flew numerous combat air patrol missions. The ship developed mechanical

difficulties, and for 5 weeks the squadron operated from NAS Atsugi while the ship underwent repairs.<sup>21</sup>

After additional in-port time at Subic Bay, Philippines, in October and November, the carrier departed for Hawaii arriving on 11 December 1962. The Red Devils were then assigned to MAG-13, 1st Marine Brigade where they remained for the next 4 years.

#### *Combat and the Far East*

On 1 March 1965, VMF-232 became Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 232 (VMF(AW)-232). As a result of the intensification of operations in Southeast Asia, the squadron left Hawaii for MCAS Iwakuni arriving there on 2 September 1966, a year and a half after the first fixed-wing squadrons had been committed to combat operations in Vietnam. During the next 2 months, the unit, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas M. Trapnell, Jr., moved in increments to Da Nang Airfield, Republic of Vietnam (RVN). By December, the last of the Red Devils had arrived at Da Nang and the squadron was assigned to MAG-11.



USMC Photo A418621

*A pair of VMFA-232 Phantoms on a mission over Vietnam. The Red Devils received their first Phantoms on 19 September 1967.*

The squadron, flying the newer F-8E Crusader which it received in August 1966, began full combat operations in December. The F-8E was similar to the F-8D but with higher-performance radar which, being mounted in the nose section, changed the appearance slightly. By the end of the month, VMF(AW)-232 had flown 571 sorties while delivering 418 tons of ordnance to enemy targets; four aircraft had received hits, and the Red Devil pilots had become familiar with the I and II Corps area as well as portions of the area north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

During the first 4 months of 1967, 19 more F-8Es were hit. In most cases, the damage was caused by a single small arms round and was easily repaired. Most importantly, no pilots were injured, but in May and June the Red Devils were not quite as fortunate. On 4 May, Major Edward F. Townley's jet was hit as it circled over a suspected enemy position. Soon the fighter was heading seaward trailing fire and smoke. Major Townley ejected and was recovered uninjured.<sup>22</sup> On the 19th, the first Red Devil was killed in action and the squadron lost its second aircraft. While flying a direct air support mission, Captain Harold J. Hellbach reported receiving fire over the target area. As the pilot turned toward the sea, the jet suddenly pitched nose up and then entered a dive exploding when it hit the ground about 6 miles from the target area.<sup>23</sup> On 21 June, Major Charles L. Cronkrite, who, after his transfer from 232 to the group staff, continued flying with the Red Devils, was killed. After experiencing mechanical dif-

ficulties, Major Cronkrite ejected and "it was suspected that the pilot was unconscious when he hit the water." July was a better month in that no one was killed or injured, but one aircraft was lost on the 2d when Major Bruce A. Martin ejected after his plane was hit. Two other F-8s were destroyed on 15 July as the result of an enemy rocket attack on Da Nang. August marked the last month of the unit's combat tour, and on the 30th, when the last plane landed, the Red Devils had amassed totals of 5,785 sorties, 7,273 flight hours, and 6,271 tons of ordnance expended.

Under the leadership of Major Melvin H. Sautter, the final preparations were made for the trans-Pacific flight to El Toro. The squadron, upon arrival in California on 1 September 1967, was assigned to MAG-33 and Major Norbert F. Schnippel, Jr., became the commanding officer. After transferring most of the squadron veterans and joining several new personnel, the unit began rebuilding. On 8 September, VMF(AW)-232 was redesignated Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 (VMFA-232). The rejuvenated squadron began receiving McDonnell F-4J Phantom II aircraft on 19 September and immediately began intensive training in preparation for its return to Vietnam. The Phantom, designated primarily as a fighter/interceptor, also possessed a full ground attack capability. It required the addition of another crew member, a naval flight officer who was employed as a radar intercept officer (RIO). The Phantom, with its two 17,000-pound thrust engines, was capable of flying at twice the speed of sound and



*Air-to-air refueling of a Red Devil F-4B by a KC-130 tanker from VMGR-352. Both squadrons were based at MCAS El Toro, California.*

could carry approximately 16,000 pounds of ordnance.<sup>24</sup>

From a modest beginning of 13 hours flown in October, the squadron flew 83 hours in November and 188 hours in December. From January 1968 to March 1969, the Red Devils conducted training at MCAS El Toro, MCAS Yuma, and Naval Auxiliary Air Station Fallon, Nevada. After an operational readiness inspection held the first week in March, the Red Devils were prepared for the return flight to Vietnam. On 17 March 1969, the advance party left for Chu Lai, Vietnam, and arrived 2 days later. The main body departed El Toro on 25 March and arrived on 27 March. The flight transit of the Pacific for the squadron's 15 aircraft plus 3 Navy F-4J's started on 20 March. En route stops were made at Kaneohe, Wake Island, Guam, and Cubi Point. By 31 March, the last of the squadron's aircraft arrived at Chu Lai.

For the next 5 months, VMFA-232 supported Marine operations in Vietnam as part of MAG-13. During that tour, two aircraft were lost, but none of the crew members were injured. The squadron accumulated over 3,000 combat sorties and flew nearly 3,600 combat hours. On 4 September 1969, the commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ralph J. Sorensen, led a two-plane flight on the unit's last combat mission. Three days later VMFA-232 redeployed to MCAS Iwakuni and was assigned to MAG-15, 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade. On 8 November, the squadron was reassigned to the 1st MAW, retaining its assignment to MAG-15.

With the exception of training deployments to Naha Airbase, Okinawa, and NAS Cubi Point, Philippines, the squadron remained with MAG-15 in Japan until April 1972. On 5 April, the 1st MAW received a warning order from FMFPac to be prepared to deploy two fixed-wing tactical aircraft squadrons to Vietnam.\* The decision was made to deploy two F-4 units, VMFA-115 and -232, based at Iwakuni. On the morning of 6 April, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued an execute order for the two squadrons and by noon the first flights were airborne. While en route an operational mishap resulted in the loss of a Red Devil plane. Both the pilot, First Lieutenant Jeffrey F. Weed, and the RIO, Captain Elber A. Highers, Jr., were killed. The total time required for the deployment of MAG-15 (Fwd) with 12 F-4Bs from VMFA-115, 15 of VMFA-232's F-4Js, and support elements from Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 15 and Marine Air Base Squadron 15 was 2 days. The rapid response of Marine aviation units was noted by all levels of command, including the President of the United States.<sup>25</sup>

Due to the temporary status of the Marine forces in Vietnam, "COMSEVENTHFLT directed that operational control of MAG-15 (Fwd) be retained by

\*In 1969, the Marine Corps began reducing its strength in Vietnam and in June 1971 the last Marine tactical aircraft squadron was redeployed to Japan. The return of Marine air to Vietnam came in response to the Communist Easter offensive in 1972.



USMC Photo A422928

*An aerial view of Nam Phong, Thailand looking southwest. Most clearly seen are the aircraft hangar spaces and fuel farm.*



USMC Photo A422933

*Red Devil F-4J Phantom jets parked on the apron at Nam Phong. VMFA-232 flew combat missions in Vietnam from Nam Phong.*

*An F-4J belonging to VMFA-232 on the Nam Phong flight line. Nam Phong was better known to the Marines as the "Rose Garden."*

USMC Photo A42289



the 1st MAW, with missions assigned by ComUSMACV air component commander (Seventh Air Force) through the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing located at Da Nang.<sup>26</sup> On 9 April, after all crews had received a briefing from the Air Force, the Red Devils' commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Joe L. Gregorcyk, led the first Marine combat mission.

On 20 June, MAG-15 (Fwd) moved to Nam Phong, Thailand, which became known to all Marines as the "Rose Garden." The Red Devils immediately began flight operations supporting South Vietnamese ground forces in the northern and central parts of RVN, as well as flying missions into Laos and North Vietnam.<sup>27</sup> Between 2 August and 30 November 1972, VMFA-232 lost three Phantoms and two crew members. One pilot, First Lieutenant Sam G. Cordova, was lost in North Vietnam and a RIO, Captain Donald C. Breuer, was lost in Laos. Both officers were listed as missing in action, but Breuer has since been declared as killed in action. For the next 11 months, the squadron operated without the loss of an aircraft or a crew member. Finally, on 1 September 1973, the squadron's third combat tour in Southeast Asia ended.

On 1 September 1973, the last Red Devil left Nam Phong and the Indochina War and made Cubi Point, Republic of the Philippines its home for the next 2½ months. While at Cubi Point, VMFA-232 took part

in a missile exercise conducted to qualify aircrewmen with the Sparrow and Sidewinder missiles. From 13 to 20 November the squadron moved 209 short tons of equipment in C-130 aircraft and established itself at MCAS Iwakuni.

For Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232, success or achievement was no longer measured in terms of bomb damage assessments, targets destroyed, and 100-mission crew members, but rather in readiness, training posture, and inspection results. By the end of June 1974, the squadron was ready to settle down to the routine of peacetime flying, but not before accepting the Hanson Award for fiscal year 1974 which distinguished the unit as the most outstanding fighter squadron in the Marine Corps. During the period for which the squadron won the award, it was under the leadership of first, Lieutenant Colonel James M. Mead and later, Major Frederick J. Schober.

On 1 September 1975 VMFA-232 celebrated its 50th birthday. The squadron remains a vital part of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and is still located at Iwakuni, Japan. It deploys several times a year for training to either Cubi Point, Kadena, or to an aircraft carrier for carrier qualification. Now, more than 50 years since its initial commissioning, the Red Devil squadron remains ready to respond.

# NOTES

The principal source materials used in preparation of this history are held by, or are obtainable from, the History and Museums Division, HQMC, hereafter, Hist&MusDiv. One of the most important files in this group is VMFA-232 Squadron History File (Hist&MusDiv), hereafter VMFA-232 HistFile. It should be noted that this reference file contains information from early years before the squadron received the VMFA designation as well as later materials.

## Early Developments

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from VMTB-232 Unit History Files (Hist&MusDiv), hereafter VMTB-232 UnitHistFile; and from comments on the draft manuscript contained in the VMFA-232 Comment File (Hist&MusDiv), hereafter VMFA-232 CommFile.

1. Maj Edwin H. Brainard "Marine Aviation—A Lecture," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (September 1926), p. 192.

2. All biographical data on general officers is from the biographical file at Hist&MusDiv.

3. Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1952), pp. 27-28, hereafter Sherrod, *Aviation*.

4. "History of Aircraft Squadrons, W.C.E.F." (VMTB-232 UnitHistFile).

5. LtGen Richard C. Mangrum, Comments on draft MS, dtd 6Feb78 (VMFA-232 CommFile), hereafter Mangrum Comments.

6. CNO 1tr to CO VMTB-232, dtd 30 Aug 44, Subj: Squadron Insignia (VMFA-232 HistFile).

7. "History of VMTB-232 Squadron Insignia" cited in VMTB-232 UnitHistFile.

8. Mangrum Comments.

9. Ibid.

10. Capt F. P. Mulcahy, "Marine Corps Winners of the Herbert Schiff Memorial Trophy," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 1934, pp. 28-29.

## World War II

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from VMSB-232 War Diaries, July 1941-November 1945, and from VMSB-232 Muster Rolls for the same period. All material is located in Hist&MusDiv.

11. VMSB-232 Muster Rolls, December 1941.
12. Sherrod, *Aviation*, p. 96.
13. Ibid, p. 196.

## Reactivation

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from VMF-232 War Diaries, June 1948-March 1953 and from VMFA-232 HistFile.

14. *Jane's All the World's Aircraft 1945-46*, compiled and edited by Leonard Bridgmen. (New York: McMillian Co.) p.259c, hereafter, *Jane's Aircraft* and date.

15. Ibid, pp.218c-219c.

16. VMFA-232 HistFile.

## The Jet Age

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from the VMFA-232 HistFile and from the *Flight Jacket*, MCAS El Toro, California, and *The Windward Marine*, MCAS Kaneohe, Hawaii.

17. VMFA-232 HistFile

18. VMF-232 Unit Diary, September 1958-March 1959, (Hist&MusDiv).

19. *Jane's Aircraft*, 1961-62, p. 235

20. *Marine Fighter Squadron 232 - 1962 WestPac Cruise Report*, dtd 8Dec62, cited in VMFA-232 HistFile.

21. Ibid.

## Combat and the Far East

Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from the VMF(AW)-232 Command Chronologies, March 1965-August 1967, and from VMFA-232 Command Chronologies, September 1967-December 1976. All material located in Hist&MusDiv.

22. U.S. Naval Safety Center, Aircraft Accident Printout for USMC Aircraft in Combat Environment (July 1963-January 1973).

23. Ibid.

24. *Jane's Aircraft*, 1966-67, p.284

25. FMFPac, "Operations of U.S. Marine Forces in Vietnam," April 1972.

26. Ibid.

27. MAG-15 Command Chronology, April-June 1962.

# Appendix A

## CHRONOLOGY

1 Sep 1925	Activated at San Diego, California, as Division 1, Fighting Plane Squadron 3M, 2d Aviation Group	Oct 1950	Relocated to El Toro, California, and reassigned to Marine Aircraft Group 15, Aircraft, FMFPac
Sep 1926	Reassigned to Aircraft Squadrons, West Coast Expeditionary Force	Aug-Sep 1952	Relocated to MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Territory of Hawaii, and reassigned to Marine Aircraft Group 13
Apr-Jun 1927	Deployed to Hsin Ho, China, and reassigned to Aircraft Squadrons, 3d Brigade	Mar 1953	Relocated to El Toro, and reassigned to Marine Aircraft Group 15
25 Jun 1927	Redesignated as Fighting Plane Squadron 10M	Sep 1953	Relocated to Kaneohe Bay, and reassigned to MAG-13
1 Jul 1927	Redesignated as Fighting Plane Squadron 6M	Feb 1958	MAG-13 reassigned to 1st Marine Brigade
Sep-Oct 1928	Relocated to San Diego and reassigned to Aircraft Squadrons, West Coast Expeditionary Force	Sep-Oct 1958	MAG-13 relocated to Atsugi, Japan
1 Jul 1930	Redesignated as Fighting Plane Squadron 10M	Feb-Mar 1959	MAG-13 relocated to Kaneohe Bay
1 Jul 1933	Redesignated as Bombing Plane Squadron 4M	Jun-Dec 1962	VMF-232 at sea in the western Pacific with the Seventh Fleet
1 Jul 1937	Redesignated as Marine Bombing Squadron 2.	1 Mar 1965	Redesignated as Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 232
Jan 1941	Deployed to Pearl Harbor	May 1965	Detached from MAG-13
1 Jul 1941	Designated as Marine Scout Bombing Squadron 232	2 Sep 1966	Relocated to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan
Aug 1941	Reassigned to Marine Aircraft Group 21, 2d Marine Aircraft Group	Sep 66-Sep 67	Relocated to Da Nang, Vietnam, and reassigned to MAG-11, 1st MAW.
Dec 41-Aug 45	Participated in the following WWII Campaigns: Pearl Harbor Guadalcanal New Georgia Bougainville Bismarck Archipelago Northern Solomons Okinawa	1 Sep 1967	Relocated to U.S. and assigned to MAG-33, 3d MAW at El Toro
1 Jun 1943	Redesignated as Marine Torpedo Bombing Squadron 232	9 Sep 1967	Redesignated as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232
Nov 1945	Relocated to San Diego	27 Mar 1969	Relocated to Chu Lai, Vietnam, and reassigned to MAG-13, 1st MAW
16 Nov 1945	Deactivated	7 Sep 1969	Relocated to MCAS Iwakuni and assigned to MAG-15, 9th MAB
3 Jun 1948	Reactivated at Floyd Bennett Field, New York, as Marine Fighting Squadron 232, Marine Air Detachment, Marine Air Reserve Training Command	8 Nov 1969	Reassigned to MAG-15, 1st MAW
1 Apr 1949	Redesignated as Marine Fighter Squadron 232	6 Apr 1972	Relocated to Da Nang
		20 Jun 1972	Relocated to Nam Phong Air Base, Thailand
		1 Sep 1973	Relocated to Cubi Point, Republic of Philippines
		14 Nov 1973	Relocated to MCAS Iwakuni
		17 Dec 1973	Relocated to NAF Naha, Okinawa
		12 Feb 1974	Relocated to MCAS Iwakuni

## Appendix B

### COMMANDING OFFICERS

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2dLt Clayton C. Jerome	1 Sep 1925 - 19 Sep 1925
1stLt William J. Wallace	20 Sep 1925 - 6 Nov 1925
Capt Harry H. Shepherd	7 Nov 1925 - 1 Dec 1925
2dLt Clayton C. Jerome	2 Dec 1925 - 11 Mar 1926
Capt Harold D. Campbell	12 Mar 1926 - 17 Mar 1926
Capt Francis P. Mulcahy	18 Mar 1926 - 3 Jun 1926
1stLt William J. Wallace	4 Jun 1926 - 14 Nov 1926
2dLt Frank H. Lamson-Scribner	15 Nov 1926 - 15 Dec 1926
1stLt William J. Wallace	16 Dec 1926 - 31 Aug 1928
1stLt Arthur H. Page, Jr.	1 Sep 1928 - 31 Oct 1928
1stLt Clayton C. Jerome	1 Nov 1928 - 30 Jun 1930
1stLt Stanley E. Ridderhof	1 Jul 1930 - 14 Jul 1930
2dLt Samuel S. Jack	15 Jul 1930 - 31 Aug 1930
2dLt Richard C. Mangrum	1 Sep 1930 - 22 Sep 1930
2dLt Elvin B. Ryan	23 Sep 1930 - 14 Oct 1930
1stLt Vernon M. Guymon	15 Oct 1930 - 15 Dec 1931
1stLt Calvin R. Freeman	16 Dec 1931 - 27 Jan 1932
Capt Vernon M. Guymon	28 Jan 1932 - 13 Aug 1933
1stLt Lawrence T. Burke	14 Aug 1933 - 5 Feb 1934
1stLt Allen C. Koonce	6 Feb 1934 - 15 Feb 1934
Capt Vernon M. Guymon	16 Feb 1934 - 22 Feb 1934
1stLt Allen C. Koonce	23 Feb 1934 - 31 Mar 1934
1stLt Albert D. Cooley	1 Apr 1934 - 31 Oct 1934
1stLt Stanley E. Ridderhof	1 Nov 1934 - 23 Apr 1935
1stLt William G. Manley	24 Apr 1935 - 12 Aug 1935
Capt Vernon M. Guymon	13 Aug 1935 - 14 May 1937
Capt Edward L. Pugh	15 May 1937 - 28 May 1937
Capt Frank D. Weir	29 May 1937 - 30 Apr 1938
Capt Hayne D. Boyden	1 May 1938 - 24 Jan 1940
Capt Pierson E. Conradt	25 Jan 1940 - 4 Jun 1940
Capt Ward E. Dickey	5 Jun 1940 - 30 Jun 1940
Maj Ira L. Kimes	1 Jul 1940 - 6 Jan 1942
Maj Richard C. Mangrum	7 Jan 1942 - 31 Dec 1942
1stLt Henry W. Hise	1 Jan 1943 - 5 Feb 1943
Capt Rolland F. Smith	6 Feb 1943 - 14 Apr 1944
1stLt Charles R. Ryan	15 Apr 1944 - 25 Apr 1944
Maj Menard Doswell III	26 Apr 1944 - 19 Jan 1945
Maj Allen L. Feldmeier	20 Jan 1945 - 16 Nov 1945
INACTIVE	17 Nov 1945 - 31 May 1948
Capt Thomas S. Ferdinand	1 Jun 1948 - 8 Oct 1950
LtCol Joseph A. Gray	9 Oct 1950 - 31 Oct 1951
Maj Frank H. Presley	1 Nov 1951 - 30 Nov 1951
LtCol Robert C. Hammond, Jr.	1 Dec 1951 - 23 Mar 1953

LtCol Robert R. Burns	24 Mar 1953 - 31 Jul 1954
LtCol Donald D. Blue	1 Aug 1954 - 22 Nov 1954
LtCol William M. Watkins, Jr.	23 Nov 1954 - 18 Jul 1955
Maj Edward R. Agnew	19 Jul 1955 - 14 Oct 1955
Maj Stephen G. Warren	15 Oct 1955 - 2 Sep 1956
Maj Emmett O. Anglin, Jr.	3 Sep 1956 - 10 May 1957
LtCol Jay W. Hubbard	11 May 1957 - 18 Oct 1958
LtCol Louis H. Steman	19 Oct 1958 - 19 Aug 1960
LtCol Robert R. Peebles	20 Aug 1960 - 8 Dec 1961
LtCol Douglas D. Petty, Jr.	9 Dec 1961 - 30 Apr 1963
LtCol Jack R. Sloan	1 May 1963 - 8 May 1964
LtCol Harrel K. Jobe	9 May 1964 - 30 Apr 1965
Maj Gerald M. Kieswetter	1 May 1965 - 31 Jul 1965
LtCol Nicholas M. Trapnell, Jr.	1 Aug 1965 - 22 Mar 1967
Maj Melvin H. Sautter	23 Mar 1967 - 31 Aug 1967
Maj Norbert F. Schnippel, Jr.	1 Sep 1967 - 31 Oct 1967
LtCol Walter P. Hutchins	1 Nov 1967 - 11 Aug 1969
LtCol Ralph J. Sorensen	12 Aug 1969 - 3 Mar 1970
LtCol Robert E. Solliday	4 Mar 1970 - 14 Oct 1970
LtCol Joseph S. Rosenthal	15 Oct 1970 - 5 Aug 1971
LtCol Joe L. Gregorcyk	6 Aug 1971 - 9 May 1972
LtCol Edward R. Maag	10 May 1972 - 8 Sep 1972
LtCol Rodney O. Lawrence	9 Sep 1972 - 19 Apr 1973
LtCol James M. Mead	20 Apr 1973 - 15 Mar 1974
Maj Frederick J. Schober	16 Mar 1974 - 19 Jul 1974
Maj Jack B. Hammond	20 Jul 1974 - 6 Aug 1974
LtCol Warren A. Ferdinand	7 Aug 1974 - 30 June 1976
LtCol Robert L. Daniels	1 July 1975 - 10 Jun 1976
LtCol Albert K. Charlton	11 Jun 1976 - 6 Oct 1977
LtCol Frank J. Horak, Jr.	7 Oct 1977

## Appendix C

# STREAMER ENTITLEMENTS

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### PRESIDENT UNIT CITATION STREAMER WITH TWO BRONZE STARS

Solomons, 24 Aug - 13 Oct 1942  
Okinawa, 4 Apr - 30 Jun 1945  
Vietnam, 15 Nov 1966 - 13 Sep 1967

### NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

Vietnam, 27 Mar - 7 Sep 1969  
Vietnam, 21 Jun - 31 Dec 1972

### YANGTZE SERVICE STREAMER

Shanghai, 23 Jun - 27 Jun 1927

### MARINE CORPS EXPEDITIONARY STREAMER

China, 22 Oct 1927 - 3 Oct 1928

### AMERICAN DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

Hawaii, 8 Sep 1939 - 7 Dec 1941

### ASIATIC-PACIFIC CAMPAIGN STREAMER WITH ONE SILVER AND THREE BRONZE STARS

Pearl Harbor-Midway, 7 Dec 1941  
Capture and defense of Guadalcanal, 20 Aug - 2 Nov 1942  
Cape Esperance, 11-12 Oct 1942  
New Georgia, 23 Sep - 16 Oct 1943  
Bismarck Archipelago, 20 Jan - 1 May 1944  
Northern Solomons, 2 May - 19 Jun 1944  
Okinawa, 22 Apr-30 Jun 1945

### \*WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER

7 Dec 1941 - 16 Nov 1945

### NAVY OCCUPATION SERVICE STREAMER WITH ASIA CLASP

Okinawa, 2 Sep - 31 Oct 1945

### \*NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

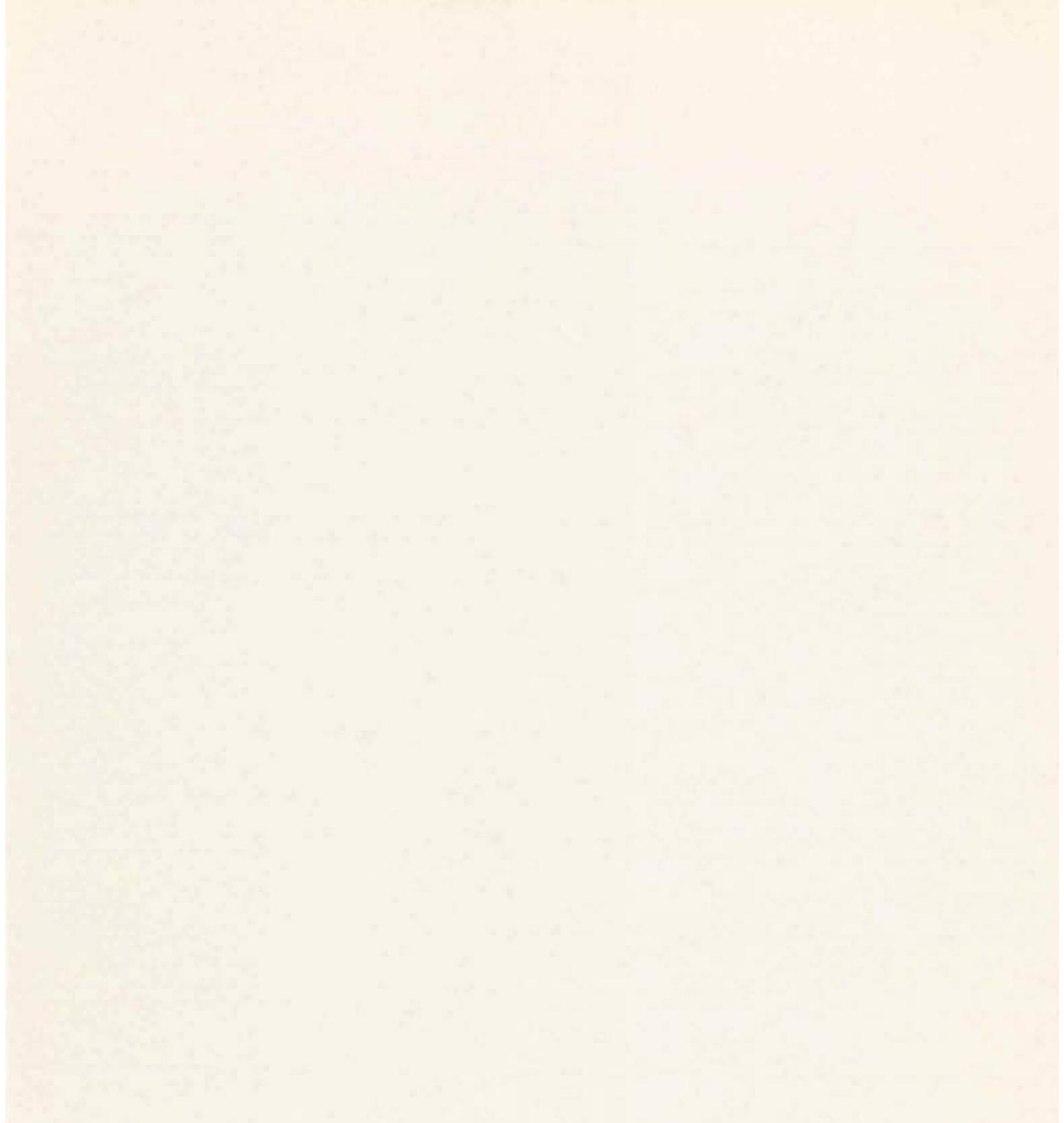
18 Sep 1950 - 27 Jul 1954  
1 Jan 1961 - 15 Aug 1974

### VIETNAM SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE SILVER STAR

Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase II, 15 Nov 1966 - 31 May 1967  
Vietnamese Counteroffensive Phase III, 1 Jun - 13 Sep 1967  
Tet 69/Counteroffensive, 31 Mar - 8 Jun 1969  
Vietnam, Summer-Fall 1969, 9 Jun - 7 Sep 1969  
Vietnam, Cease-Fire Campaign, 6 Apr 1972 - 28 Jan 1973

### \*VIETNAM CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH PALM

15 Nov 1966 - 7 Sep 1969



*The back cover shows the squadron insignia of VMFA-232. The Red Devil in the diamond-shaped field has been used by the squadron since its inception.*

